

THE CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE

Chapter XLIV.

After the theater last night we went over to a very fashionable cafe, where women and men both go for something to drink, but where no food is sold.

I had never been to the place, which is one of the rooms in a hotel, and I confess I was a little curious about it.

The corridors were brilliantly lighted and were lined with gorgeously dressed women and, walking up and down, were men who appraised the women with flirtatious eyes. There was the blare of ragtime music, punctuated here and there by loud laughter, in both masculine and feminine keys.

The great room, which was apart from the restaurant proper, was full. Groups of men and women were sitting about tables, and at other smaller tables could be seen just a couple. All seemed much interested in each other, and every person in the room had a glass of something to drink before him or her.

Dick took me to a table for two and I gazed about on the handsomely gowned women with surprise, for so many of them seemed only girls of sixteen or seventeen. I wondered if those girls' mothers knew where they were and what they were doing.

"Who are you bowing and smiling at, Dick?" I asked as I saw him salute someone behind me with the greatest cordiality.

Dick frowned and said: "It's Kitty Mairam, Margie, and I have been waiting to tell you for a long time that you had better 'cut her out.'"

"What do you mean by 'cutting her out?'" I asked.

"Well, I don't want you to be seen going around with her."

Now, the truth of the matter is that Kitty and I have never been intimate, but for all that I did not relish being told pre-emptorily to "cut her out," and so I said: "Why do you

say that, Dick?"

"Well," he answered, still frowning, "she is getting herself talked about a good deal. She is seen a good deal at the theater and the 'classy' restaurants, beautifully gowned, with Bill Tenney. Bill is a good fellow, all right, and I guess he is married to an impossible woman. They are not living together, but she won't divorce him—neither will she give him any reason by which he can get a divorce. He seems to be 'gone' on Kitty, and she has reached that point where she has thrown the speech of people to the winds."

"That probably explains why Kitty called me up this morning and asked me to sit in her box at the Grand Opera on Wednesdays during the season. I thought it was queer that she had money enough to have an opera box for all the Grand Opera matinees."

"She's got her nerve!" exclaimed Dick. "Of course, she would like to have you add respectability to her game."

"Do you think she has passed the bounds of respectability—and is she playing a game?" I asked.

"I don't know and I don't care," answered Dick roughly. "I only know she has been making herself very conspicuous, and I'm not going to have you brought into the mess."

While I was not sure that I would not do just as Dick had commanded, I resented the idea that I could not judge for myself, and I mentally decided that I would wait until I knew more about poor Kitty and her affairs before I cut her off my list of acquaintances. Consequently I walked past her table and spoke a few words to her as we went out. Dick was furious and hardly spoke to me all the way home.

Kitty said she was coming over very soon and then I am going to ask her frankly about herself.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)